



# The PHOENIX PATRIOT

“...From the Ashes...”

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Photo By Sgt. Lt. Amanda Straub

## Afghan War College - Open for Training

Story by Lt. Eric Musial  
201st RCAG PAO

**KABUL, Afghanistan** - Under a typical brilliant blue Afghan sky the first class of the Senior Command and Staff College (SCSC) began training on Oct. 28 with celebration. The inaugural class was welcomed by dignitaries including the First Deputy Minister of Defense, Dr. Noorstani, CSTC-A Commander, Maj. Gen. Robert E. Durbin and Brig. Gen. Douglas Pritt.

Durbin addressed the new class saying, “You must work smarter in order to defeat your enemies. The Afghan people are depending on you to ensure their security.”

This is the first time upper Afghan security leadership will receive formal training. The goal is to make a more professional, united and educated organization. Graduates will be better prepared to work with both government and non-governmental agencies for rebuilding projects, natural disaster planning and

political security and stability.

The SCSC has a detailed curriculum, spread out over three phases. Each phase has a different emphasis. The initial phase is known as the Foundation Phase and will teach students an array of subjects including, democracy and the military, and the theory of international relations.

The later phases, known as the Operational Phase and the Strategy Phase, respectively, will have instruction on command and leadership, the

integration of other government agencies, strategic and financial management of defense, development of service policies and much more. Students will also receive English language and computer training in each phase. Throughout the course students will be instructed by ambassadors from nations including Great Britain, the United States, Russia, India, Iran, Pakistan, and China as well as representatives from the United Nations, NATO, the Red

See **War College** on page 3

**INSIDE  
THIS  
ISSUE**



**MCPON  
Visits  
Sailors  
pg. 3**



**Soccer Game  
Represents  
Success in  
Afghanistan  
pg. 4-5**



**ANA Medic  
Teaching  
More Than  
Medical Care  
pg. 6**



## On Point w/ the CSM

Jungleers,

CSM Conley has gone to the States to set our Warriors up for success when our tour here is completed. His stops include Guard Bureau to get some of our Warriors on the 2007 promotion list, who, through no fault of their own, have not been able to attend

NCOES. Next stop: Camp Shelby, La. in order to set up NCOES courses for us, should we de-mob at that location. He will also be briefing our follow on unit on what to expect when they arrive in Afghanistan and observing training of an ANA unit at Fort Polk, La. I am extremely proud and feel honored to be representing him and this fine task force in his absence. We have a great team living by the motto, "Mission First, Soldiers Always."

With mid-term elections just around the corner I am sure you are aware of the bickering going on regarding our participation in the war on terrorism. Most of the arguing is about the war in Iraq but it affects Afghanistan as well. This country has been in turmoil for many years. Just look around at the abject poverty and destroyed buildings to see the stark reality.

I feel it is imperative we continue to do all we can to improve the lives of the Afghan people. If we do, they will always look upon us as friends and allies. To walk out on them now would be a big mistake. Our jobs here are important and each one of us can do much to touch the lives of the Afghan people. We donate our pogs, hand out pencils to children and assist in humanitarian projects. This is all in addition to our military jobs supporting the ETT's down range. We do so because we care. All this has an impact on the people of Afghanistan. I urge each of you to renew your commitment to doing all you can while here to truly make a difference.

Steve Gates  
CSM, USA  
Command Sergeant Major (A)



## General Guidance

Warriors,

As we recognize and celebrate Veterans Day I am extending my personal thanks to every member of the Phoenix V team for your service to our nation and your commitment to the Task Force mission. As veterans each of you is a hero. You are heroes

because you are not only defending our freedom on the front lines you are also helping the Nation of Afghanistan provide a safe and secure environment for its citizens. You are heroes to the more than 5 million children who are now free to attend school. You are heroes to the over 7 million Afghans who have been able to return to their homes after being forced to flee their war torn nation. You are heroes to the 23 million citizens of Afghanistan who now enjoy freedom when all they had known was war for the past 20 years. You are heroes to the citizens of the free nations throughout the world who recognize your unwavering resolve to protect the freedoms we all cherish.

I appreciate the professionalism and flexibility you have demonstrated everyday as we adjust and adapt to the changing environment and mission requirements. Your selfless service is consistent with the values of the veterans that preceded you and serves as a perfect example for the service men and women who will follow you in this most noble of efforts.

Veterans day is a special day to remember and recognize the members of the Armed Forces who have given so much that we might live free. We honor those who have preserved our way of life and protected freedom for millions of people throughout the world. We honor each of you for continuing the legacy of dedicated service that is helping expand freedom to the people of Afghanistan.

Douglas A. Pritt  
BG, USA  
Commanding

### Getting "SMART"

Recently you may have noted John Kerry's comment, that if you don't study and get smart, you end up in Iraq. Well Mr. Kerry, stand by for an education because you have the opportunity here to become enlightened and with an ounce of luck, become "SMART" enough not to make suggestive comments about the intelligence of our American troops.

As opposed to a tailored itinerary with the opportunity for scheduled breaks and banquet dinners; the American Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine spends

his or her time from before dusk until after dawn preparing for missions, training, and assuming a host of other duties that arise unexpectedly during the course of the day or night in support of nation building in Afghanistan, a mission which mirrors that of Iraq.

Our American forces are composed of various individuals who hold degrees at all levels education and those who have demonstrated skills and abilities acquired as a result of training during the course of service to their country. In addition, American forces in all branches have adopted various levels of educa-

tional goals and requirements in order to advance in their military careers. All branches of service require education for advancement and have created electronic portals to make this possible even during deployments. Most assuredly, there has been a book or two cracked in order to gain expertise in the variety of career paths offered in the services.

And so Mr. Kerry, I challenge and invite you to theater. Don your sandy boots and clean weapon and the book you need to study to pass the next advancement exam while fighting the war on terrorism.

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# Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Visits

Story and Photos by  
Lt. Janette Arencibia

**KABUL, Afghanistan** – Master Chief Petty Officer Joe R. Campa visited Sailors assigned as individual augmentees at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) 19 Oct. His visit included a tour of the training facility and various components that Navy personnel are augmenting, most notably, the Embedded Training Teams (ETTs). Col. James R. Lyman, Commander of the American party at KMTC, welcomed Campa and shared various aspects of training and leadership skills demonstrated by Sailors augmenting the Army National Guard.

“Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine serving in Afghanistan, nor did I ever think I would be serving alongside the Air Force and Navy, but we’re doing it and it’s working,” Lyman said. “The Navy is doing a fine job at augmenting our efforts to train the ANA. This is a mission that every branch of the service can participate in because we all have the ability to train and train well.”

There are several Navy service members in key leadership positions at KMTC. Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan Singleton, S-1 personnel officer, performs remarkably as a Navy officer performing an Army responsibility.

“It is a tough job to be a person-

nel officer in your own branch of service and LCDR Singleton has mastered the Army system and is doing a superb job,” Lyman said.

Campa visited Sailors during lunch and provided a question and answer session focused on Sailors and their achievements as well as their concerns. He explained that individual augmentees will have a positive impact on fleet readiness by teaching other Sailors the new skill sets they are learning. Sailors listened while Campa explained that the Army National Guard and other services are creatively utilizing Sailor skill sets in a foreign environment creating well-rounded Sailors.

“When Sailors return to their parent commands, they are better technical, skilled leaders,” Campa said.

Campa stressed the importance of Navy leadership visiting deployed Sailors and



MCPON Joe R. Campa, Jr. speaks with Sailors at KMTC about their positive impact in Afghanistan.



Col. James R. Lyman tells MCPON Joe R. Campa about the successes of Navy Individual Augmentees at KMTC.

said the information he gathered would be used to prepare other augmentees.

“The process of individual augmentation is getting better as a result of reviewing the experiences of Sailors who are currently individual augmentees,” Campa said.

Campa thanked Sailors for their service and expressed the pride the Navy has in their skills and abilities in a foreign environment.

“The Sailors serving in this theater take such pride in their mission,” Campa said. “They are sharing Navy culture with other services and the feedback we’re getting is that the other services value the culture the Navy is providing.”

## War College Begins Classes

*Continued from page 1*

Cross, and the European Nation. Students of the SCSC will tour military installations in Pakistan and India learning first hand how their new skills can be employed to the betterment of Afghanistan.

Over the six month course, the students will work together in group discussions and activities. This will likely form leadership bonds which will benefit the nation and help quell inter-tribal disputes. The class consists of 15 upper-level ANA officers and three senior ranking Afghan National Police officers from all over Afghanistan. For love of country, each of these men traveled far from their homes and families. They

are here as leaders, but most importantly, they are here as Afghans. Over the next several months, debate will occur, ideas will expand and from the diversity that is Afghanistan, the future will blossom.

Task Force Phoenix V provides a staff of five who developed the course and will act as facilitators for discussions and ideas. Col. Bill Bankhead, Idaho National Guard, mentors the Afghan Assistant Director of the SCSC, Lt. Col. Shahbazkheil. Shahbazkheil is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College, class of 2006. As Assistant Director, he will ensure the SCSC runs smoothly.

Others in the American contingent include executive

officer and education specialist, Cmdr. Dorthy Engh from Salt Lake City, Utah; security officer, Captain Tannis Mittelbach from Portland, Ore.; operations officer, Lt. Cmdr. Jason Greene; and information technology specialist Petty Officer 3rd Class Glen Gilmore who maintain the school’s computers and

provide technical support.

The SCSC is something all Afghans can be proud of. It is a place where the leaders of their security forces can come together and build a stronger and more brilliant future for their armed forces and for their nation as a whole. It is a facility where bonds, both professional and personal are sure to take root.



Students of the Senior Command and Staff College register for class.



# Soccer Builds Team Spirit

Story and Photos By  
1st Lt. Amanda Straub

In America children learn to play soccer from an early age. Imagine a world where children are ruthlessly beaten for attempting to play sports. For Western thinking countries this may be difficult, but five short years ago the reality in Afghanistan was so oppressive that Afghans attempting to play sports were severely punished and beaten by the Taliban.

On Oct 20, a group of young Afghan girls enjoyed a friendly game of soccer with a team of American Soldiers. The good-natured game may seem trivial, but it was representative of progress and freedom in Afghanistan for common citizens.

Klaus Staerk, from Germany, and Ali Asker Lali, an Afghan who moved to Germany during the Soviet occupation, had the idea to introduce soccer (or football) in Afghanistan as an organized sport to show Afghans a better way of life and give them something to hope for. The German Football Project is going strong supporting 14 teams in Afghanistan.

“The main goal is to use sports, football, to give the people fun,” Staerk said. “We want to take away from the pain and sorrow of the day. Give them a sense of life.”

In addition, the program teaches Afghans discipline, team work and training through organized sports and provides health benefits through regular exercise.

The German Football Project supports Afghan teams with equipment and coaching. Staerk and Lali find Afghans who are able and willing to



American Goalie, 1st Lt. Dendra Haeckler returns a ball after the Afghans score.



coach and then train them to be coaches. They link the coaches up with players from around the country. They sponsor the Afghan national

team, which competes with other Asian countries, as well as teams for youth.

The coaching is paying off. The young Afghan women's team, composed of girls between the ages of 14 and 19, wiped out the American team 2-0. The Afghan girls showed promise deftly manipulating the ball and running circles around the older Americans. The Americans have never played together as a team and blamed their lack of practice and coaching for the embarrassing loss, but both sides had fun and appreciated the



Yasamin, 14-year old Afghan soccer player drives a ball down the field. Her team is part of the German Football Project, intended to better the lives of Afghans with teamwork, discipline and fun through organised sports.



# for Afghans and Americans



An all-women's soccer game on Oct. 20 highlighted many of the successes of the five-year war on terrorism in Afghanistan.



opportunity to build relationships with women from another country.

"It was a very good game," said 14-year old Yasamin from the Afghan team. "This was my first time playing with an international team and I hope to do it again."

"It was a hard game for us," 2nd Lt. Hannah Coombe, American medical officer, said. "We have never played together before, but it was a lot of fun."

The game was well-attended by both sides with roughly 60 family members and friends of the Afghan girls and a steady stream of Soldiers from all different countries stopping by.

The game represented more than relationship building and fun. For the Afghans, it represented freedom.

Five years ago no Afghan could enjoy something as simple as a soccer game in peace and security. The young Afghan girls who played in this game would not have left their houses, much less played soccer. The next time someone says we are losing Afghanistan, look around you at all the little indicators of monumental success, and remember, they haven't been here.



After a friendly soccer game, female American Soldiers shake hands with young Afghan girls. Although the score was 2-0, the game represented victory for both sides.



# Afghan Medic - Teacher of Life's Lessons

Story By Sgt. Margaret C. Nelson

Part Two of a Two-Part Story

**HERAT, Afghanistan** – It is estimated that for every coalition soldier that dies here in combat, between 40 to 60 Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers perish. Those numbers change daily. When asked why he chose such a dangerous profession, the soft-spoken Mohammad Younis does not hesitate when responding, “So I can help my country and my people.”

Younis is an experienced combat medic in the 207th Corps who teaches fellow Soldiers first aid as well as teaching new medics advanced combat treatment.

In addition to teaching medical courses, Younis is a red-belt in Judo and volunteers to teach fellow Soldiers self-defense during off-duty hours so they can protect themselves from people who do not support their career choice.

The Taliban reign may be over, but insurgents continue to terrorize Afghans and are especially ruthless to Afghans who join the ANA



Photo By Provided by Mohammed Younis

Mohammad Younis is a multi-talented ANA medic who teaches medical classes and self-defense to fellow Soldiers.

and civilians who help the U.S.

Army. Most ANA Soldiers hide their enlistments from friends and family members for fear of being discovered, tortured, or killed. Recently, the Taliban tortured two ANA Soldiers to death by cutting off their faces as their families were forced to listen by cellular phone.

Younis, his family and his village are a rare exception.

“I know there is danger. My family knows there is danger. My village knows it’s dangerous to be an ANA Soldier,” Younis said. “We also know that this is our country and we have to do something. It is our responsibility as Afghans.”

Younis’ village is located in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan border. When he returns home on leave he fields questions from the entire village about what he’s been doing.

“My family, friends and the

children of my village are very proud of me. I am an inspiration to them,” he said. “The children are always asking me to tell them my stories and what it is like to be a Soldier. Many will follow in my footsteps.”

Younis has written a poem that reflects his country’s past and the importance of the ANA to its future. He recites an abbreviated version:

“Today because of the glory my heart smiles for me,

Thank God that our ANA is developing.

How much cruelty happened in past years?

Nobody was able to sleep because of fear and cruelty.

All the enemies, they are hiding in the caves,

Thank God that our ANA is building.”

Younis does not want the meaning to get lost in translation. He explains, “The poem means there is no refuge for the Taliban.”



Photo By Sgt. Margaret C. Nelson

ANA combat medic Mohammad Younis explains the importance of personal protective gear in the medical field and how to use it.



Photo By Sgt. Margaret C. Nelson

Mohammad Younis is an Afghan patriot proud of his service and dedicated to the goal of bringing peace to his nation.

# Police Support Team Conducts First Operation

Story and Photo By  
Staff Sgt. Matt Leas  
207th RCAG PAO

**HERAT, Afghanistan** - On October 4, 2006, the newly formed Herat Police Support Team (PST) conducted its first training mission with the local Afghan National Police (ANP). The task was to set up a checkpoint operation and conduct random searches. Members searched vehicles traveling west toward Iran through the town of Ishmael Qullah. The ANP, were looking for weapons, drugs, explosives and any other illegal items.

“This checkpoint mission is important because

it will allow the ANA and ANP to get used to working together which will help out with security operations in the future,” said Master Sgt. Douglas West, non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of the Herat PST.

The Herat PST team worked tirelessly on a strategy to mentor their ANP counterparts in conjunction with Dyna Corps to ensure the future success of the police force. The PSTs are brand new and comprised of Embedded Training Teams (ETTs) from around the country. Many of the ETTs assigned have police experience from their civilian careers while others have

security expertise gained from previous deployments.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert Reddick, a PST member, created and executed the training portion of the operation and provided valuable feedback to his ANP counterparts. His training plan was useful and professional according to one ANP Officer. They are glad to have started working with the U.S. Army and the ANA on these operations.

At the end of the day, no illegal contraband was found, but the ANP and ANA gained valuable



Task Force Phoenix Embedded Trainers in Herat are among the first to tackle training the Afghan National Police.

training and experience working in concert with each other. This mission was a significant one on the road to uniting the Afghan National Security Forces as one force to protect the citizens of Afghanistan.

# The Doll Maker of Kabul Comes to Phoenix

Story and Photo By  
Lt. Janette Arencibia

In March of 2004, a woman from Australia introduced the art of doll making to an Afghan woman. The concept was to make dolls and sell them for a small profit. Heeding the advice of her Australian friend, Weeda Mahri began making the dolls and successfully sold them to Europeans in downtown Kabul. A small business was born that is growing as fast as her all-female work force can make new dolls. A female owned business with a female employee base is a rarity in Afghanistan and is giving women a new self-sufficiency and freedom unknown during the Taliban reign.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) awarded the initial grant of \$4000.00 to Mahri, which provided the resources for purchasing material. Most of the dolls are made of material from the Kabul area with the exception of a few of the dolls that require material from the Kundus province. All of the embroidery on the dolls is done by hand. Different dolls reflect different personalities of Afghanistan.

Mahri is the manager of Afghan Women Enterprise where she employs 25 women who make the dolls in several different parts and then sew them all together by hand. Four dolls can be made in one day and the women work five hours a day.

Mahri faces obstacles as a woman in business but has only been discouraged once from continuing to make the dolls and sell them for a profit as Islam discourages

the employment of women. The opportunity for Mahri to continue employing women and producing a quality product motivates her to continue her business even at risk to herself. Mahri prides herself in employing women who are either widows or who have husbands suffering from disabilities and are not able to work as a result of the wars they have fought in Afghanistan.

Mahri's marketing efforts have graduated from word of mouth to a web address at [www.kabuldolls.com](http://www.kabuldolls.com) where customers can view samples of her product and purchase dolls. Other marketing efforts have come as a result of additional grants. Mahri received a grant for \$3800 from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) for marketing and materials. The MOI tracks her success and confirms she is doing well with the money awarded to her.

Mahri plans to pass the business on to her daughter who already spends a lot of time in her shop. Sometimes her daughter assists in the shop by stuffing parts of the doll before they are sewn together.



Soldiers at Camp Phoenix peruse a selection of dolls made by Weeda Mahri.



# Featured Patriot - Tech. Sgt. Brian Lackman

**Story and Photo by  
Cmdr. Chad Sneec  
205th RCAG PAO**

In August 2006, the motor pool at Forward Operating Base Apache in Qalat stood in disarray. Spare parts and tools languished in jumbled piles inside connex boxes, and numerous vehicles were in need of preventive maintenance.

Some serious reorganizing was required, and Air Force Technical Sergeant Brian Lackman was just the person to fine-tune the Apache motor pool and make it hum like a well-oiled machine.

Within three days of assuming his duties in August as the Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge of the motor pool, Lackman organized work spaces in the connex boxes and constructed benches, shelves and storage bins for spare parts, petroleum, oil and lubricants.

Lackman, a Philadelphia native, approached each problem with methodical discipline, often employing limited resources to achieve creative solutions.

Lackman used a small piece of heavy-gauge tie-down strapping to make a wrench that he uses to remove the oil

filter from an up-armored humvee.

"Innovation is a big part of my job," Lackman said. "I often have to figure out ways to make repairs without having the required tools. You need to have patience to look at the problem and find a creative solution."

After Lackman, 35, got his workspaces organized, he turned his attention to improving preventive maintenance for the 45 vehicles and other machinery assigned to FOB Apache.

He instituted front-to-back inspections of all vehicles and began issuing monthly bulletins reminding convoy commanders and truck commanders of important safety checks to conduct before taking a vehicle outside the wire. Whenever possible, Lackman strives to repair a vehicle at Apache, instead of sending it to a larger facility.

"I'd rather repair a vehicle at Apache because doing so keeps from putting lives at risk to take the vehicle elsewhere," Lackman said. "A local repair saves money and gets the vehicle back to the user more quickly."

The need to complete repairs on site becomes especially critical when a convoy moving through the area has to stop at Apache because a vehicle needs to be fixed.

Such repairs often need to be done on

amoment's notice, regardless of the time.

"There aren't any set hours," Lackman stressed. "If a vehicle breaks down at 3 a.m., I've got to get moving and get it fixed."

The fast pace and numerous demands on his time keep Lackman charging at full speed, and he wouldn't have it any other way, but he's not too proud to acknowledge that he can't do it all by himself.

"We're like a big family here — we all help each other to get the job done," Lackman said.

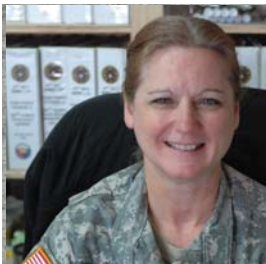
As for the various cuts and bruises that are acquired through the course of his duties, Lackman joked that they come with the territory.

"Hey, if I don't bleed at least once a day," he laughed, "I haven't done any work!"



Tech. Sgt. Brian Lackman, innovative NCOIC of FOB Apache's motor pool, adds power-steering fluid to an up-armored humvee.

## Sound Off - How Do You Remember Cherry?



"When I was on crutches he leaned against me on my way to my room. I felt like it was his way of giving me a hug."

**SGT Donna Mitchell**  
LTF HHC SPO  
Gresham, Ore.



"Cherry was one of my first introductions at Camp Phoenix and my son Christian enjoyed me sending home my pictures with him."

**LCDR Tracy Ray**  
Transportation Officer  
Odessa, Fla.



"I had the privilege of being one of the only people to actually see Cherry run. He ran across Patriot Plaza to lay down on the rug that I used to wash for him. It is where he used to chew his pig ears."

**SSGT Tammy Gordon**  
JAG  
Lagrande, Ore.



"I remember Cherry distracting a viper snake in front of the PX. I think it was his way of trying to protect our Soldiers."

**Major Kim York**  
LTF HHC 53  
Klamath Falls, Ore.



"I found it ironic that Cherry was lying on the porch of the JAG office the day that he was being transferred from Camp Phoenix."

**LT Michael T. Omalley**  
41st BCT  
Austin, Texas